



Secretary of the Air Force
Office of Legislative Liaison

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RESUME

107TH Congress

Date: 22 March 2001

SUBJECT: Military Strategy and Operational Requirements

COMMITTEE: Senate Armed Services Committee

CHAIRMAN: The Honorable John W. Warner (R-VA)

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

REPUBLICANS

Sen Smith (NH)

Sen Inhofe (OK)

DEMOCRATS

Sen Levin (MI)

Sen Nelson (NE)

Sen Carnahan (MO)

WITNESSES: General Joseph W. Ralston, USAF, SACEUR/USCINCEUR
General Tommy R. Franks, USA, USCINCCENT

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Prepared by: Ms. Heather Shockney **Date:** 22 March 2001 **Ext:** 695-4825

Committee was called to order at 0950

Sen Warner's Opening Remarks

- Welcomed Gen Ralston and Gen Franks. Presented deployment figures of US servicemen and women deployed throughout the world with 20,000 in the Persian Gulf area, 4600 in Bosnia and 6000 US participants in NATO's KFOR Operation. Addressed central command attacks and terrorist attacks including the USS Cole. Addressed the need for engagement policy assessment.

General Ralston's Opening Remarks

- USEUCOM spans over 91 countries with 100,000 servicemen and women deployed to this region.
- Addressed the support of Northern Watch with nearly 7,500 sorties made in 2000, noting that at least 250 of those sorties came under fire; addressed Bosnia and the decrease of US forces as a percentage of KFOR - from 33% of forces being US in 1996 to 20% today and looking at 18% in the next few months.

Sen Warner asked if downsizing US forces in Bosnia is in our best interest and whether or not a full withdrawal could spur another war.

General Ralston commented that with a bi-annual assessment of US forces needed in Bosnia, withdrawing would not hurt with NATO's involvement, but a war could easily begin if all US forces were withdrawn completely.

- Commented on the large concern for supply routes into Kosovo with the main route going through Macedonia where only a small number of US forces are located to fend off extremists. Alternate routes are being explored with NATO via Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania.
- Addressed humanitarian efforts in Africa and the training of two Nigerian battalions in Sierra Leon, training a Ghana battalion in Ghana, and a Senegal battalion in Senegal.
- Drew attention to two issues most important within the US Armed Forces: 1) Property Maintenance and 2) Military Construction. Property maintenance problems involve 69% of military abroad. Said military housing standards should include a washer/dryer, stove, refrigerator, and two bathrooms.

Gen Franks Opening Remarks

- honored those killed in the F-18 bombing accident in Kuwait and thanked the Kuwaiti's for their support and respect for the US and its personnel.
- Supplied figures about the number of forces enforcing the no fly zone.
- Stated resource balance, a higher level of policy, and experience in creating policy should help to address threats such as the terrorist attack of 12 October 2000 on the USS Cole.

Sen Warner addressed Gen Ralston on military construction and quality of life requirements. Stated although this is important, it is a small part of Congress's concerns. Posed the question whether or not there may be a diminishing respect for NATO and what Europe does to share the burden.

Gen Ralston suggested the US may ask more of the Europeans than should be asked. Suggested with four nations in the European Union who are not in NATO, this requires giving options to NATO and the EU for them to work through decisions together.

Sen Warner commented on an article from March 21 in the London Daily Telegraph which stated "NATO's attempt to quell the growing conflict in the Balkans is being hampered by America's reluctance to risk casualties." Asked for further comment.

Gen Ralston commented he had read the article and takes exception to it. Stated soldiers in Kosovo are ready and willing to do their duty. Gave an example of US soldiers defending themselves by killing two extremists in Macedonia. Stated US servicemen and women are there to do their jobs as well as protect themselves.

Gen Franks commented further on Gen Ralston's statement, taking exception to the contents of the article and stated that the troops are asked to do what they need to do.

Sen Levin addressed the No Fly Zones under the jurisdiction of Gen Ralston and Gen Franks. Questioned whether or not it is in the best interest to maintain the No Fly Zones because of cost and because of the risk US aviators take.

Gen Ralston responded by saying the bigger question is rather what the military consequences would be if those zones were not maintained. Said Sen Levin's question was a policy issue, one that only POTUS can decide. Commented that from a military perspective aviators must be well informed.

Gen Franks stated troops and aviators have flown 153,000 No Fly Zone missions since 1992. Stated in the last year, 10,000 sorties have been flown.

Sen Smith questioned and asked for comments on three issues 1) Iran defense increase, 2) China involvement in Iran, Libya, and Pakistan, and 3) China involvement in Iraq. Questioned whether or not the recent attack on Iraq was to injure Chinese technicians.

Gen Franks commented that Iraq has gained information and knowledge whether by way of China or not in command control, fiber optic communication, and weapons platform. Stated the recent Iraqi attack was never meant to injure Chinese technicians, nor was it intended to injure anyone.

Sen Carnahan stated more needs to be done to inform Americans of the numerous problems in the Persian Gulf. Asked Gen Franks if meetings were held with regional leaders.

Gen Franks responded that meetings are not set. Area leaders come to the military with their concerns and issues and the military provides any assistance if needed.

Sen Carnahan commended Gen Ralston on his comments on military readiness and concerns about military budget.

Sen Inhofe stated 67% of US military housing within the United States is also below standard. Commended Gen Ralston on speaking out about African humanitarian issues. Questioned Gen Franks on areas of armed forces with deployed servicemen and women that could be reduced in order to deploy elsewhere to improve military readiness.

Gen Franks stated forces in the Persian Gulf region are flexible and can change daily.

Sen Inhofe questioned the training of aviators from the USS Truman accidental bombing incident and whether or not inert training at Vieques (Puerto Rico) was received. Addressed the potential for more air refueling and more oilers in the Gulf area.

Gen Franks stated the aviator involved in the accidental bombing incident did receive Vieques training and the most realistic training is with live ammunition. Deferred comments on Navy in-flight refueling to Adm Clark.

Sen Warner questioned naval training in Vieques and whether or not Vieques training is effective. Questioned whether or not aviators should be sent without proper training. Queried whether the meaning of the resources the US military is defending in the Persian Gulf has been lost.

Gen Franks commended the Oil for Food program, stating that it displayed to the people of Iraq that US military involvement in their country is not against the people but against Hussein.

Sen Warner brought attention to the increasing destabilization of other areas around Kosovo.

Gen Ralston addressed the clash of civilization in such a concentrated area. Drew attention to the upcoming election in Montenegro on 22 April and its impact on other cultural groups in the area.

Sen Nelson hopes to help in bettering family friendly environments in military housing. Questioned the steps being taken for security in Macedonia.

Gen Ralston commented that although security in Macedonia is very difficult in this mountainous area and important, other countries in Europe, such as in Italy, Great Britain, and Germany, also faced security threats just as serious.

Gen Franks backed Gen Ralston's comments by saying 127,000 messages have been received, stating potential attacks. Improved intelligence and improved policy analysis can help in determining the legitimacy of these potential threats.

Sen Levin commented on Montenegro being separate from many Balkan states because it has a history of independence.

Gen Ralston stated the election comments were merely to point out the upcoming election will more than likely start a debate in regards to other cultures.

Sen Inhofe commented on the citizens of Vieques, PR and their fondness for the US Navy. Presented over 1700 petitions hand-delivered by visitors and citizens of Vieques, indicating Vieques would go so far as secede from Puerto Rico to support the US Navy.

Open Hearing closed at 11:43AM